

reply, among others those specially directed against John of Gaunt and the corrupt practices of the late Privy Council. It appears from the tone of these replies to the Commons' petitions that, in spite of the newly appointed body of King's advisers, the Duke had always kept or already recovered the royal confidence. The Commons asked that none of the impeached should be pardoned ; the King replied that ' he would do his will as seemed good to him.'<sup>9</sup> They asked that those who had been found guilty of peculation should not be employed again in the public service ; they were put aside by a bare promise that such cases should be tried by the King and his Council. After hearing these unsatisfactory replies, nothing remained for the members but to ride home each to his shire or borough, with mixed feelings of joy over the good work done and forebodings as to its permanence.<sup>1</sup>

Even if John of Gaunt did not inspire these replies to the petitions, as there is good reason to suspect he did, he was soon completely reinstated at Court and in power. He induced the King to recall Lord Latimer as a first step. This was in itself a defiance of the late Parliament, but it was followed by an act still more decided. The Council appointed by the Commons to govern the King and kingdom was without further ceremony dissolved.<sup>2</sup> This very questionable exercise of royal prerogative by an old man stretched on his sick-bed could not have been carried through if all the members of the Council had stood together ; for they included the most powerful Bishops and barons in the kingdom, and were supported by public feeling. John of Gaunt, however, had undermined the loyalty of several to their colleagues and to the nation. Lord Percy, the chief of the opposition in the late Parliament, and next to March the greatest peer on the Council, was brought over to the Lancastrian side, became the confidant of the Duke, and obtained the chief share of the spoils. It is probable that the Earls of Arundel and Stafford also acquiesced in the Duke's usurpation of the power delegated to them in Parliament, for they did not scruple to appear six

» *Rot. Parl.* ii. 322, aec. 9, 333 pet.  
xiv. 356 pet. cxxx, 366 p. t. cxxxiii. »  
*Chron. Ang.*, 102-3 ; *Wals.*, I 322.